

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8479
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

S E C R E T KHARTOUM 4286

E.O. 11652: XGDS-4
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, SU
SUBJECT: IMPENDING CABINET CHANGES

REF: (A) KHARTOUM 4145, (B) KHARTOUM 4133

1. MAJOR CABINET CHANGES MAY BE ANNOUNCED AS EARLY AS SEPT 16, ACCORDING MANY SOURCES. PIECING TOGETHER WIDELY CIRCULATED RUMORS, IT APPEARS NIMEIRI MAY SEEK TO INCLUDE REPRESENTATIVES OF MAJOR OPPOSITION GROUPS SUCH AS SADEQ AL-MAHDI'S UMMA PARTY, NATIONAL UNIONIST PARTY (NUP), AND MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD. POLITICAL PARTIES REMAIN ILLEGAL, OF COURSE, EXCEPT FOR SUDAN SOCIALIST UNION (SSU) HEADED BY SECRETARY GENERAL ABUL GASSIM, BUT PARTY AFFILIATION OF PROMINENT PERSONS IS ALWAYS WELL KNOWN.

2. MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE BONA MALWAL RING MAY BE REPLACED BY ALI SHUMO, NOW STATE MINISTER FOR YOUTH AND SPORTS. TWO "DARK HORSE" CANDIDATES FOR INFORMATION MINISTRY ARE AHMED ZEIN AL-ABDIN (NUP) AND AL-SADIG ABDALLA ABDAL-

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MAJID, MOSLEM BROTHER. NEW EDUCATION MINISTER IS EXPECTED TO BE DR. MANDOR AL-MAHADI, MOSLEM BROTHER. PRESENT EDUCATION MINISTER DAFALLA EL HAG YOUSIF MAY MOVE TO COMMERCE MINISTRY TO REPLACE HAROUN AL AWAD.

3. MINISTRY OF DEFENSE, PRESENTLY HELD BY NIMEIRI, MIGHT BE GIVEN TO UMAR NUR AL DIEN, IMMA PARTY. LESS-LIKELY CANDIDATE

IS ENGINEER DR. MUSA MADIBO, ALSO UMMA PARTY AND WITH EXPERIENCE AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE. MINISTER OF HEALTH MAY BE DR. ABDEL-HAMID SALIH, UMMA PARTY. VARIANT RUMOR CLAIMS THAT SALIH WILL BE MADE SSU WHIP IN NEXT SESSION OF NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS RESULT DEAL BETWEEN SADEQ AND NIMEIRI. FORMER NUP EXECUTIVE NAST AL DIN AL SAYID, NOW MEMBER OF PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY, MAY BECOME MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

4. ACCORDING TO RUMOR, MINISTRIES OF SOCIAL AFFAIRS AND OF YOUTH AND SPORTS MAY BE MERGED UNDER LEADERSHIP OF UMMA PARTY LOYALIST. IN THAT CASE, PRESENT SOCIAL AFFAIRS MINISTER DR. FATIMA ABDEL MAHMOUD WOULD GET AMBASSADORSHIP, MOST LIKELY LONDON. SADEQ SUPPORTERS MAY ALSO BE GIVEN MINISTRIES OF RELIGION AND OF INDUSTRY, ALTHOUGH PRESENT INDUSTRY MINISTER BASHIR ABADI IS LIKELY TO REMAIN IN CABINET IN SOME CAPACITY.

5. SADEQ AL-MAHDI IS SAID TO HAVE PROPOSED UMAR NUR AL DIN, AL TAYIB HASSAB AL RASOUL, BAKRI ADEIL AND ABDAL RAHIM MIRGHANI FOR CABINET POSITIONS. UMAR NUR AL DIN IS PARTISAN POLITICIAN WITH EXPERIENCE AS MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE (1966) AND DEPUTY FLOOR LEADER IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. HE FLED NIMEIRI'S REGIME IN 1969 AND REMAINED IN EXILE UNTIL HE RETURNED WITH SADEQ LAST OCTOBER. HASSAB AL RASOUL WAS ONCE SENIOR EMPLOYEE IN FINANCE MINISTRY AND LATER WORKED FOR GULF INTERNATIONAL IN SAUDI ARABIA. ABDAL RAHIM MIRGHANI WAS GOVERNOR OF BANK OF SUDAN (1968-9) AFTER SERVICE IN FINANCE MINISTRY. BAKRI ADEIL
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CANNOT BE IDENTIFIED UNDER THAT NAME.

6. COMMENT: BONA MALWAL'S RESIGNATION IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED LONG AGO AND HIS RELIEF NOW IS UNRELATED TO HIS OUT-SPOKEN CRITICISM OF SOME OF NIMEIRI'S POLICIES IN PUBLIC (REF B) AND IN CABINET MEETINGS. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER NIMEIRI WILL PUT ANOTHER SOUTHERNER IN CABINET AS SYMBOL OF UNITY. ALTHOUGH ABEL ALIER WOULD BE LEADING CANDIDATE, HIS APPOINTMENT WOULD BE DISLIKED BY PRESENT SOUTHERN LEADERSHIP. DAFALLA EL HAG YOUSIF, EDUCATION MINISTER FOR LAST TWO YEARS, HAS BEEN LEADING MEMBER OF BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND IS LOGICAL CHOICE FOR COMMERCE, EDUCATION AND INFORMATION, AS WELL AS RELIGION, ARE THOUGHT TO BE TARGETS FOR BOTH MOSMEL BROTHERHOOD AND SADEQ AL-MAHDI'S SUPPORTERS. DR. FATIMA IS AT PRESENT ONLY WOMAN IN CABINET.

7. CABINET SHUFFLE WAS EXPECTED TO AWAIT NIMEIRI'S RETURN FROM HIS AMERICAN AND EUROPEAN TOUR (REF A). ONE REASON FOR MAKING MAJOR CHANGES SHORTLY BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE FROM SUDAN MAY BE TO IMPROVE ACCEPTABILITY OF GOVERNMENT AND TO WIDEN BASE OF SUPPORT. THIS IS ACHIEVED BY COOPTING FORMER OPPOSITION INTO LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE. ALTHOUGH DOUBTS EXIST ABOUT REAL

POLITICAL STRENGTH OF SADEQ AL-MAHDI, NUP, AND MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD, OPPOSITION LEADERS WOULD BE PREOCCUPIED DURING NIMEIRI'S ABSENCE BY ESTABLISHING THEMSELVES IN NEW APPOINTMENTS. RELATED REASON FOR CABINET CHANGE NOW MAY BE FIRST VICE PRESIDENT ABUL GASSIM'S WELL-KNOWN ANTIPATHY TOWARDS RECONCILIATION WITH FORMER OPPOSITION. NIMEIRI MAY WANT TO ESTABLISH CABINET OF HIS CHOICE BEFORE PUTTING SUDAN TEMPORARY IN ACTING PRESIDENT ABUL GASSIM'S UNTRUSTWORTHY HANDS.
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